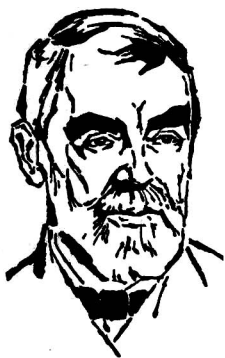
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SAMUEL BUTLER
EREWHON



A SIGNET CLASSIC



SAMUEL BUTLER was born at Langar, Nottinghamshire, on December 4, 1835. His father and grandfather were clergymen, and they expected him to enter the ministry in turn. Young Butler, however, wished to be a painter, and when he graduated from Cambridge in 1858 he refused, on the grounds of religious doubt, to enter the Church. He emigrated to New Zealand where he established a sheep-run on the Rangitata and contributed articles to the New Zealand press. In 1864, Butler sold out and returned to London. Back home, he devoted himself to painting, music, and writing. From 1868 to 1876, he exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy. Among the books he published during this period were: the penetrating satire *Erewhon* (1872), *Fair Haven* (1873), *Life and Habit* (1877), *Alps and Sanctuaries of Piedmont and the Canton Ticino* (1881). Between 1873 and 1885, Butler worked on *The Way of All Flesh*. Not published until 1903, a year after his death, this autobiographical novel incorporated the sum total of the author's ideas on religion, economics, and philosophy. In his last years, Samuel Butler turned his attention to a study of Homer and Shakespeare. He died on June 18, 1902, his many-sided talent never fully appreciated until just prior to World War I, when his reputation reached a high point of recognition.

Samuel Butler



EREWTHON

OVER THE RANGE

WITH AN AFTERWORD BY

Kingsley Amis



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PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION

MY PUBLISHER wishes me to say a few words about the genesis of the work, a revised and enlarged edition of which he is herewith laying before the public. I therefore place on record as much as I can remember on this head after a lapse of more than thirty years.

The first part of *Erewhon* written was an article headed "Darwin among the Machines," and signed Celarius. It was written in the Upper Rangitata district of the Canterbury Province (as it then was) of New Zealand, and appeared at Christchurch in *The Press* newspaper, 13th June, 1863. A copy of this article is indexed under my books in the British Museum catalogue. In passing, I may say that the opening chapters of *Erewhon* were also drawn from the Upper Rangitata district, with such modifications as I found convenient.

A second article on the same subject as the one just referred to appear in *The Press* shortly after the first, but I have no copy. It treated Machines from a different point of view, and was the basis of pp. 270-274 * of the present edition of *Erewhon*. This view ultimately led me to the theory I put forward in *Life and Habit*, published in November 1877. I have put a bare outline of this theory (which I believe to be quite sound) into the mouth of an Erewhonian philosopher in chapter 27 of this book.

In 1865 I rewrote and enlarged "Darwin among the Machines" for *The Reasoner*, a paper published in London by Mr. G. J. Holyoake. It appeared 1st July, 1865 under the heading "The Mechanical Creation," and can be seen in the British Museum. I again rewrote and en-

* Signet Classic edition, pp. 172-198.

larged it, till it assumed the form in which it appeared in the first edition of *Erewhon*.

The next part of *Erewhon* that I wrote was "The World of the Unborn," a preliminary form of which was sent to Mr. Holyoake's paper, but as I cannot find it among those copies of *The Reasoner* that are in the British Museum, I conclude that it was not accepted. I have, however, rather a strong fancy that it appeared in some London paper of the same character as *The Reasoner*, not very long after 1st July, 1865, but I have no copy.

I also wrote about this time the substance of what ultimately became "The Musical Banks," and the trial of a man for being in a consumption. These four detached papers were, I believe, all that was written of *Erewhon* before 1870. Between 1865 and 1870 I wrote hardly anything, being hopeful of attaining that success as a painter which it has not been vouchsafed me to attain, but in the autumn of 1870, just as I was beginning to get occasionally hung at Royal Academy exhibitions, my friend, the late Sir F. N. (then Mr.) Broome, suggested to me that I should add somewhat to the articles I had already written, and string them together into a book. I was rather fired by the idea, but as I only worked at the MS. on Sundays it was some months before I had completed it.

I see from my second Preface that I took the book to Messrs. Chapman and Hall 1st May, 1871, and on their rejection of it, under the advice of one who has attained the highest rank among living writers, I let it sleep, till I took it to Mr. Trübner early in 1872. As regards its rejection by Messrs. Chapman and Hall, I believe their reader advised them quite wisely. They told me he reported that it was a philosophical work, little likely to be popular with a large circle of readers. I hope that if I had been their reader, and the book had been submitted to myself, I should have advised them to the same effect.

Erewhon appeared with the last day or two of March 1872. I attribute its unlooked-for success mainly to two early favourable reviews—the first in *The Pall Mall Gazette* of 12th April, and the second in *The Spectator* of 20th April. There was also another cause. I was complaining once to a friend that though *Erewhon* had met with such a warm reception, my subsequent books had

been all of them practically still-born. He said, "You forget one charm that *Erewhon* had, but which none of your other books can have." I asked what? and was answered, "The sound of a new voice, and of an unknown voice."

The first edition of *Erewhon* sold in about three weeks; I had not taken moulds, and as the demand was strong, it was set up again immediately. I made a few unimportant alterations and additions, and added a Preface, of which I cannot say that I am particularly proud, but an inexperienced writer with a head somewhat turned by unexpected success is not to be trusted with a preface. I made a few further very trifling alterations before moulds were taken, but since the summer of 1872, as new editions were from time to time wanted, they have been printed from stereotypes then made.

Having now, I fear, at too great length done what I was asked to do, I should like to add a few words on my own account. I am still fairly well satisfied with those parts of *Erewhon* that were repeatedly rewritten, but from those that had only a single writing I would gladly cut out some forty or fifty pages if I could.

This, however, may not be, for the copyright will probably expire in a little over twelve years. It was necessary, therefore, to revise the book throughout for literary inelegancies—of which I found many more than I had expected—and also to make such substantial additions as should secure a new lease of life—at any rate for the copyright. If, then, instead of cutting out, say fifty pages, I have been compelled to add about sixty *invita Minerva*—the blame rests neither with my publisher nor with me, but with the copyright laws. Nevertheless I can assure the reader that, though I have found it an irksome task to take up work which I thought I had got rid of thirty years ago, and much of which I am ashamed of, I have done my best to make the new matter savour so much of the better portions of the old that none but the best critics shall perceive at what places the gaps of between thirty and forty years occur.

Lastly, if my readers note a considerable difference between the literary technique of *Erewhon* and that of *Erewhon Revisited* I would remind them that, as I have

just shown, *Erewhon* took something like ten years in writing, and even so was written with great difficulty, while *Erewhon Revisited* was written easily between November 1900 and the end of April 1901. There is no central idea underlying *Erewhon*, whereas the attempt to realize the effect of a single supposed great miracle dominates the whole of its successor. In *Erewhon* there was hardly any story, and little attempt to give life and individuality to the characters; I hope that in *Erewhon Revisited* both these defects have been in great measure avoided. *Erewhon* was not an organic whole, *Erewhon Revisited* may fairly claim to be one. Nevertheless, though in literary workmanship I do not doubt that this last-named book is an improvement on the first, I shall be agreeably surprised if I am not told that *Erewhon*, with all its faults, is the better reading of the two.

Samuel Butler.

7th August, 1901.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

HAVING BEEN ENABLED by the kindness of the public to get through an unusually large edition of *Erewhon* in a very short time, I have taken the opportunity of a second edition to make some necessary corrections, and to add a few passages where it struck me that they would be appropriately introduced; the passages are few, and it is my fixed intention never to touch the work again.

I may perhaps be allowed to say a word or two here in reference to *The Coming Race*, to the success of which book *Erewhon* has been very generally set down as due. This is a mistake, though a perfectly natural one. The fact is that *Erewhon* was finished, with the exception of the last twenty pages and a sentence or two inserted from time to time here and there throughout the book, before the first advertisement of *The Coming Race* appeared. A friend having called my attention to one of the first of these advertisements, and suggesting that it probably referred to a work of similar character to my own, I took *Erewhon* to a well-known firm of publishers on the 1st May 1871, and left it in their hands for consideration. I then went abroad, and on learning that the publishers alluded to declined the MS., I let it alone for six or seven months, and, being in an out-of-the-way part of Italy, never saw a single review of *The Coming Race*, nor a copy of the work. On my return, I purposely avoided looking into it until I had sent back my last revises to the printer. Then I had much pleasure in reading it, but was indeed surprised at the many little points of similarity between the two books, in spite of their entire independence of one another.

I regret that reviewers have in some cases been inclined to treat the chapters on Machines as an attempt to reduce Mr. Darwin's theory to an absurdity. Nothing could be further from my intention, and few things would be more distasteful to me than any attempt to laugh at Mr. Darwin; but I must own that I have myself to thank for the misconception, for I felt sure that my intention would be missed, but preferred not to weaken the chapters by explanation, and knew very well that Mr. Darwin's theory would take no harm. The only question in my mind was how far I could afford to be misrepresented as laughing at that for which I have the most profound admiration. I am surprised, however, that the book at which such an example of the specious misuse of analogy would seem most naturally levelled should have occurred to no reviewer; neither shall I mention the name of the book here, though I should fancy that the hint given will suffice.

I have been held by some whose opinions I respect to have denied men's responsibility for their actions. He who does this is an enemy who deserves no quarter. I should have imagined that I had been sufficiently explicit, but have made a few additions to the chapter on Malcontents, which will, I think, serve to render further mistake impossible.

An anonymous correspondent (by the handwriting presumably a clergyman) tells me that in quoting from the Latin grammar I should at any rate have done so correctly, and that I should have written "agricolas" instead of "agricolae." He added something about any boy in the fourth form, etc., etc., which I shall not quote, but which made me very uncomfortable. It may be said that I must have misquoted from design, from ignorance, or by a slip of the pen; but surely in these days it will be recognized as harsh to assign limits to the all-embracing boundlessness of truth, and it will be more reasonably assumed that *each* of the three possible causes of misquotation must have had its share in the apparent blunder. The art of writing things that shall sound right and yet be wrong has made so many reputations, and affords comfort to such a large number of readers, that I could not venture to neglect; it the Latin grammar, how-

ever, is a subject on which some of the younger members of the community feel strongly, so I have now written "agricolas." I have also parted with the word "infortuniam" (though not without regret), but have not dared to meddle with other similar inaccuracies.

For the inconsistencies in the book, and I am aware that there are not a few, I must ask the indulgence of the reader. The blame, however, lies chiefly with the Erewhonians themselves, for they were really a very difficult people to understand. The most glaring anomalies seemed to afford them no intellectual inconvenience; neither, provided they did not actually see the money dropping out of their pockets, nor suffer immediate physical pain, would they listen to any arguments as to the waste of money and happiness which their folly caused them. But this had an effect of which I have little reason to complain, for I was allowed almost to call them lifelong self-deceivers to their faces, and they said it was quite true, but that it did not matter.

I must not conclude without expressing my most sincere thanks to my critics and to the public for the leniency and consideration with which they have treated my adventures.

9th June, 1872.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE AUTHOR wishes it to be understood that Erewhon is pronounced as a word of three syllables, all short—thus, E-re-whon.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The Author wishes to be understood that this
is presented as a work of class syllabus in
this subject.

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